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FORELOCK the WARLOCK

#16
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FORELOCK THE WARLOCK

GREETINGS, *CREATURES OF THE NIGHT!* WELCOME BACK TO MY *HORRIBLE HAVEN.* MY THREE FAVORITE THINGS IN THE WORLD ARE *VAMPIRES, WEREWOLVES* AND *COMIC BOOK FANS.* I HOPE YOU ARE *ONE* OF THEM.
ONCE AGAIN, WE HAVE AN ISSUE PACKED TO THE BRIM WITH *MAD SCIENTISTS, FETID BACTERIA, CREEPY CADAVERS, AND DEATH HIMSELF!* ENJOY THESE STORIES, *FEAR FIENDS,* AS MUCH AS I ENJOYED *DIGGING THEM UP* FOR *YOU!*

Art by
Angelo Torres

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IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT EACH MAN HAS HIS ALLOTTED TIME IN THIS WORLD, AS WE KNOW IT---AND THEN, THE GRIM, IRREVOCABLE END...BONES TO ASHES...ASHES TO DUST! BUT THIS WAS NOT SO FOR..

THE MAN WHO OUTDISTANCED Death!

AIIEEEE!! I--I DONIT WANT TO DIE! I DON'T WANT TO DIE!

THE PAIN OF EXERTION WAS AN UNBEARABLE AGONY IN GEORGIE KERRIK'S LITHE YOUNG LEGS AS HE RAN, PRESSING HIMSELF FORWARD WITH AN HYSTERICAL SOB! BUT THE VAGUE SHADOW IN SWIFT PURSUIT GREW LARGER AND MORE TERRIBLE BY THE SECOND!

I-IT'S COMING CLOSER--GAINING! I--I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY.

HE CRIED OUT WITH A TERRIBLE DESPERATION TO THE FIGURE AHEAD OF HIM, A BRONZED BODY GLISTENING WITH THE EFFORT OF THE FANTASTIC FLIGHT!

WHITECLOUD!---WHITECLOUD! TELL ME WHAT IS HAPPENING! WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN! OH, LORD---HE DOESN'T HEAR ME!

Strange Suspense Stories #4, December 1952. Art: George Evans. Publisher: Fawcett.

WHAT IS THIS I AM RUNNING ON ? THIS STRANGE, LIMITLESS CIRCULAR TRACK OF SMOLDERING SMOKE ----- SUSPENDED OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE ?

UNHHHH ! BODIES FROZEN IN THE VARIOUS POSTURES OF DEATH ! DEAD WHERE THEY HAVE FALLEN !

WHITECLOUD ! ... WHITECLOUD ! WAIT ! I -- I'VE GOT TO CATCH UP TO HIM --- I'VE GOT TO !

BUT I NEVER COULD CATCH HIM --- RIGHT FROM THE BE-GINNING ! EACH TIME WE RACED IT WAS THE SAME ! I REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME ....

EVEN AS HE CONTINUED SHOUTING -- HE WAS TRYING TO PRESS HIS DAZED MIND TO CLARITY, TO RECALL THE INCREDIBLE EVENTS THAT LED TO THIS NIGHTMARISH MOMENT. THE FIRST TIME HE SAW WHITECLOUD, THEN, TOO, HE WAS RUNNING BEHIND HIM. IT WAS A CROSS-COUNTRY MARATHON, AND HE, GEORGIE KERRIK --- WAS A NEW, EAGER, FLEET-FOOTED PRODIGY !

COME ON, KID -- KEEP GOING !

IT'LL DO HIM NO GOOD ! NO MAN IS A MATCH FOR THAT INDIAN !

H-HE'S WON ! THE INDIAN IS WON ! I RAN THE BEST RACE OF MY LIFE AND I DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE !

THE STEEL-MUSCLED INDIAN FINISHED FAR OUT IN FRONT AS HE DID IN EVERY ONE OF FOURTEEN RACES---AND KERRIK PLACED A HEARTBREAKING SECOND! HE COULD NOT BEAR IT AND HE BROKE DOWN AND WEPT WITH FRUSTRATION!

I--I'D BE A CONSISTENT WINNER IF NOT FOR HIM!

THERE, MY LAD! IT HAS BEEN THIS WAY EVER SINCE WHITECLOUD APPEARED AS A RUNNER! LOOK AT THE EARLY RECORDS!

---1920, 1910, 1905--WHY, HE GOES AS FAR BACK AS THE RECORD BOOK! BUT HOW CAN THIS BE? HOW OLD IS HE?

AGELESS! WHO KNOWS! WE'VE GIVEN UP TRYING TO FIND OUT ABOUT HIM. WHITECLOUD IS THE ONLY NAME WE KNOW HIM BY!

TROUBLED, GEORGIE WATCHED THE QUIET, STALWART INDIAN AS HE DRESSED IN THE LOCKER ROOM. THERE HE NOTICED A PECULIAR IMPERFECTION OF THE REDMAN'S MAGNIFICENT PHYSIQUE.

WHITE MARKINGS--ALMOST LIKE INDELIBLE HANDPRINTS! I--I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THEM! SO MUCH ABOUT HIM IS--STRANGE!

WHITECLOUD --I-I'D LIKE TO GET TO KNOW YOU!

IT IS BETTER THAT NO ONE GETS TO KNOW ME!

WOULDN'T EVEN TALK TO ME! I'LL FOLLOW HIM! PERHAPS I CAN LEARN THE SECRET OF HIS STRENGTH AND ENDURANCE! MAYBE IT IS SOME EXERCISE!

TRAILING THE INDIAN TO A HOUSE NEAR THE DESERTED EDGE OF TOWN, GEORGIE REMAINED INDECISIVELY IN THE SHADOWS, TRYING TO FIND ENOUGH COURAGE TO ENTER. THEN---HE HEARD---

AN UNEARTHLY HOWLING! I-IT'S COMING FROM THE ROOF!

SMOKE! IS THE PLACE ON FIRE?

GEORGIE CREPT UPWARD--AND THERE AT THE ROOF'S EDGE, THE SIGHT CONGEALED HIS BLOOD! A FIGURE WAS CLOTHED IN CEREMONIAL ATTIRE, DANCING A TRIBAL RITE AND CHANTING BENEATH THE LUMINESCENT MOON!

WHITECLOUD! H-HE'S INSANE!

MIGHTY ANCESTORS--I BID YOU HAPPINESS IN THE BOSOM OF THE WHITE FATHER! GIVE YOUR BLESSING TO ME---- CHIEF WHITECLOUD COMATOK OF THE EXULTED SEMINOLES!

THE SPLOTCHES ON HIS BACK! THEY ARE AGLOW WITH AN UNEARTHLY PALLOR NOW!

H-HE SEES ME! I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE!

GEORGIE SHUDDERED, RELINQUISHED HIS PERCH AND FLED INTO THE SHIELDING NIGHT, HIS HEART POUNDING!

BUT I FOUND OUT WHO HE REALLY IS! A SEMINOLE CHIEF---COMATOK! NOW I CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT HIM! I-I'LL GET THE KEY TO THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY FROM THE JANITOR!

LATER, A FURTIVE FIGURE POURED OVER VOLUMINOUS WORKS OF INDIAN HISTORY IN THE SHROUDED SILENCE OF A HUGE DESERTED ROOM, AND--

IT COULDN'T BE THIS FAR BACK! I---BUT HERE IT IS, CHIEF WHITECLOUD COMATOK! IT EVEN MENTIONS HIS GREAT SWIFTNESS!

BUT THIS WOULD MAKE HIM---TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY YEARS OLD!

I--I WON'T RUN AWAY, THOUGH EVERY NERVE INSIDE ME IS TWISTING WITH FEAR! I WILL NOT RUN ALWAYS SECOND TO THIS---THIS MAN!

IT WAS A STRUGGLE OF DAYS---WEEKS, FOR GEORGIE KERRIK! A HUNDRED TIMES HE STARTED FOR WHITECLOUD, TO CONFRONT THE UNIQUE BEING WITH HIS DISCOVERY! EACH TIME FEAR AND INDECISION CHECKED HIS MOVE! BUT ONE EARLY DUSK, DESPERATION LED HIM TO THE ROAD WHERE HE KNEW WHITECLOUD LIMBERED HIS MUSCLES EACH MORNING! THERE---

YOU! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

I-I'VE GOT TO TALK TO YOU! AND I MEAN TO, THIS TIME!

YOU ARE TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY YEARS OLD! I KNOW THAT! WHY HASN'T DEATH TAKEN YOU?

THE INDIAN WAS TENSED, SHOCKED AT THE SUDDEN DISCLOSURE.... AND THERE WAS AN AIR OF MIND-CHILLING VAGUENESS, MYSTERY, IN HIS ANSWER!

LIFE IS A RACE AGAINST DEATH! BUT DO NOT PURSUE THESE THOUGHTS ANY FURTHER, YOUTHFUL ONE!

B-BUT I'VE GOT TO KNOW! I CAN'T GO ON THIS WAY!

WAIT---I WON'T CONTINUE TO BE LEFT BEHIND, I TELL YOU! I WON'T!

IT WAS AN OBSESSION NOW! THERE WAS NO TURNING BACK! GEORGE KERRIK WOULD RESORT TO ANY END TO KNOW THE TRUTH ABOUT THIS STRANGE BEING! HE WENT EVEN SO FAR AS TO SPY IN THE HOUSE OF THE UNWARY INDIAN. THERE WERE MANY NIGHTS OF VIGILANCE.

PERHAPS IT IS ALL FOR NOTHING! HE IS STILL AS A TOMB!

SOMETHING IS HAPPENING TO HIM! I-IT'S A HEART ATTACK! HE'S GOING TO DIE!

I WILL NOT WAIT FOR YOU, BLACK ONE! YOU WILL NOT CONQUER ME!

BUT IN HIS DEATH THROES, THE INDIAN SURGED ERECT AND BEGAN RUNNING, MADLY, SWIFTLY INTO THE NIGHT!

I-IT'S NOT POSSIBLE! HE'S RUNNING AWAY FROM SOMEONE ---BUT WHOM? I--I'LL GO AFTER HIM!

GEORGIE KERRIK FOLLOWED---FASTER AND FASTER DOWN THE THIN THREAD OF ROAD. SUDDENLY, AN INCREDIBLE THING OCCURRED!

TH-THE ROAD IS FADING BENEATH MY FEET! IT IS BECOMING A SMOKING WHISP OUT IN MID AIR!

--THAT'S HOW IT ALL HAPPENED! YES! I REMEMBER HOW I GOT HERE! BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

AND NOW GEORGIE'S MIND RETURNED TO THE PRESENT, HAVING BRIDGED THE PAST HAPPENINGS IN FRACTIONAL SECONDS. EVERY FIBRE INSIDE HIM WAS TEARING WITH THE EFFORT OF THE CHASE! HE DID GAIN SPEED---BUT IT WAS OF LITTLE COMFORT!

I-IT'S STILL COMING UP!

WHITECLOUD!-- --WHITECLOUD! OH --HE'S TURNING! HE SEES ME!

YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE FOLLOWED ME! THAT IS DEATH BEHIND YOU! IT IS HE WHO OVERTAKES ALL THE LIVING!

THAT IS WHAT YOU MEANT ABOUT LIFE BEING A RACE AGAINST DEATH! IT IS REALLY A RACE!

YES--BUT I HAVE EVADED HIM! EACH TIME HE IS CLOSE UPON ME, I ESCAPE WITH A SWIFTNESS HE HAS NEVER SEEN IN MORTAL MAN!

I--I'M TIRING QUICKLY! MY INSIDES ARE AFIRE WITH THE EFFORT TO BREATHE!

WHITECLOUD PULLED AWAY--BUT DEATH CREPT INEXORABLY CLOSER TO WEAKENING GEORGIE KERRIK! HE SOBBED --GASPED--STUMBLED!

UHHHHH!

AJEEEEEEE

THE SHADOW CLOSED OVER HIM--A COLD WAVE ENGULFED HIM AND THEN DEATH FLED BY HIM! HE DROPPED OFF HIS FEET AND LAY THERE, ALL FEELING RAPIDLY LEAVING HIM!

OH--! I-I'M DEAD! DEAD!

WHITECLOUD! WHAT ARE YOU DOING? BY COMING BACK YOU HAVE KILLED YOURSELF!

THERE IS STILL A CHANCE! UP--I WILL HELP YOU!

IF WE CAN LAP DEATH--GET AHEAD OF HIM BEFORE YOUR BODY IS COLD, HE CAN BE BEATEN STILL!

I--I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN MOVE...I-I HAVEN'T THE STRENGTH! BUT I'LL TRY!

MOVE--! FASTER! FASTER!

THERE HE IS! WE ARE GAINING--!

I--I CAN'T! I---I CAN'T!

WHITECLOUD PUSHED HIM, PULLED HIM, URGED KERRIK ON! EACH MUSCLE WAS A BOWSTRING TENSED TO SNAPPING! THEN --THEY WERE ABREAST OF THE BLACK ONE!

I--I'M GOING TO PUSH YOU OUT AHEAD OF HIM! NOW!

Y-YOU'RE AHEAD! NOW GO! H-HE'S TIRING! I---- UHHHHH!

GEORGIE TURNED AS HE RAN! WHITECLOUD'S PRODIGIOUS EFFORT TOOK ITS TOLL! THE INDIAN STUMBLED, SUNK SLOWLY DOWN--- AND DEATH PAUSED, MOMENTARILY EXHAUSTED!

WHITECLOUD! ----NO, WHITECLOUD ---GET UP!

I AM OLD---AND LONELY FOR MY PEOPLE! YOU ARE YOUNG, RUN GEORGE KERRIK ---RUN!

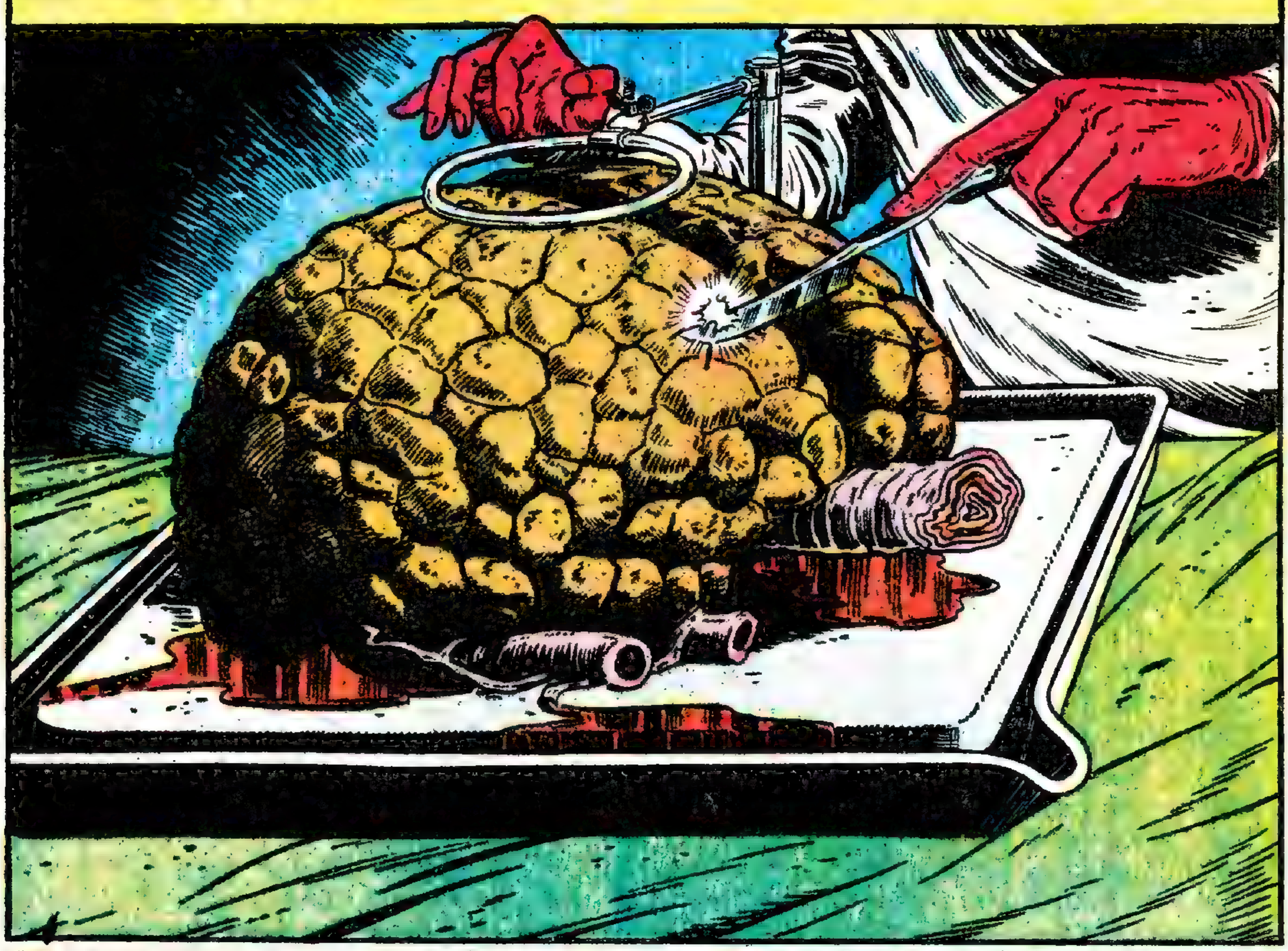
---GOT TO KEEP GOING! GOT TO!

SUDDENLY, GEORGIE FOUND HIMSELF RUNNING INTO THE NIGHT AGAIN, HIS FEET SOLIDLY POUNDING THE EARTH! HIS HEART SWELLED WITH ELATION.

I AM BACK--- SAVED! MY ARM-- IT GLOWS WHERE DEATH TOUCHED IT! YES----IN DAYLIGHT IT WILL BE WHITE LIKE THE SPLOTCHES ON WHITECLOUD'S BACK!

The Stolen Brain

EVERYTHING THAT PORTER HUMPHREY TOUCHED TURNED INTO GOLD! THEY CALLED HIM THE MIDAS OF WALL STREET, AND HE WAS THE BEST HATED MAN IN THE COUNTRY! BUT NOBODY DID ANYTHING ABOUT IT UNTIL DOCTOR MANNOX CAME ALONG, FULL OF CUNNING AND GREED, AND WITH A SKULL FULL OF GHOULISH PLANS FOR THE TYRANNOUS TYCOON! SIT TIGHT NOW, BESIDE YOUR COZY FIRES, AND LISTEN TO THE FRIGHTENING TALE OF **THE MAN WHO STOLE A BRAIN...**



PORTER HUMPHREY WAS MEAN AS THEY COME — A SKINFLINT WHO COULD DO NOTHING EXCEPT MAKE MILLIONS ON THE STOCK MARKET...

YOU FOOL! I'LL HAVE YOU FIRED TOMORROW! DON'T ARGUE WITH ME, DO YOU HEAR? I SAID BUY FIVE-THOUSAND SHARES OF EDISON OIL AND I MEANT IT!

Y- YES, SIR! AT ONCE, SIR!

WHILE DOCTOR CLAUDE MANNOX WAS INTERESTED IN HIS EXPERIMENTS WITH THE HUMAN BRAIN! BUT HE HAD FIENDISH DESIGNS ON ONE PARTICULAR BRAIN...

I NEED MONEY DESPERATELY! AND I KNOW HOW TO GET IT — IF ONLY I CAN GET TO A CERTAIN OLD MONEYBAGS! I'VE GOT TO GET MONEY TO CARRY ON MY WORK!

Mysteries #1, May 1953. Artist unknown. Publisher: Superior.

AFTER WEEKS OF CAREFUL PLANNING, THE DOCTOR MAKES HIS FIRST MOVE...

HMMM— ALL THIS IS VERY INTERESTING, MANNOX! THIS, ER, NEW DRUG OF YOURS SOUNDS AS THOUGH IT MIGHT HAVE COMMERCIAL POSSIBILITIES!

I'M GLAD YOU'RE INTERESTED, MR. HUMPHREY! I COULD SHOW YOU SOME OF MY EXPERIMENTS — TONIGHT IF YOU WISH!

AND SOON THE TERRIBLE SCHEME OF THE DOCTOR BEGINS...

I'M VERY INTERESTED, DOCTOR! A DRUG THAT WILL CURE ARTHRITIS OVERNIGHT! HMMM— WORTH A FORTUNE IF WE EXPLOIT IT PROPERLY!

I HAD THOUGHT OF *GIVING* THE DRUG TO HUMANITY, MR. HUMPHREY! I DON'T WANT TO EXPLOIT IT FOR MONEY!

WHAT! DON'T BE A FOOL, DOCTOR! I CAN SEE THAT YOU NEED A HARD-HEADED BUSINESS MAN TO TAKE CHARGE OF THINGS!

NEVER GIVE ANYTHING AWAY, MAN! IF PEOPLE SUFFER, THAT'S THEIR LOOKOUT, NOT OURS! IF THIS NEW DRUG IS AS GOOD AS YOU SAY, WE'LL MAKE 'EM— (CHUCKLE)— PAY THROUGH THE NOSE! PEOPLE WILL PAY ANYTHING TO AVOID PAIN!

CAB

UPTOWN DOWNTOWN

WHAT LITTLE PITY THE DOCTOR EVER FELT FOR HIS VICTIM IS GONE NOW...

THIS IS WHERE YOU WORK, EH? WELL, SHOW ME THE DRUG QUICKLY, WILL YOU! I'M A VERY BUSY MAN, YOU KNOW!

IN A MOMENT I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU!

SELFISH PIG! THE WORLD WILL NEVER MISS THIS ONE!

LABORATORY

A GARROTE OF WIRE IS QUICK, NOISELESS — AND DEADLY...

DON'T THINK THAT I FEEL BADLY ABOUT THIS, MR. HUMPHREY, BECAUSE I DON'T! IT'S A REAL PLEASURE TO KILL YOU! I'D PREFER TO USE A CLUB — ONLY THAT MIGHT DAMAGE YOUR BRAIN!

GUUUU- I— OH— UNNNNN-

THE DOCTOR GOES ABOUT HIS GHOULISH TASK WITH DEFT AND EXPERIENCED HANDS...

HAH—I WAS RIGHT! A LARGE BRAIN, EXTENSIVELY CONVOLUTED! IN PRIME CONDITION, TOO! I'M GLAD—(CHUCKLE)—THAT IT WASN'T DAMAGED!

HOW DO YOU FEEL NOW, OLD MONEYBAGS? A LITTLE UNCOMFORTABLE, PERHAPS? BUT YOU MUSTN'T WORRY BECAUSE I'M GOING TO TAKE EXCELLENT CARE OF YOU—YES INDEED!

THE BRAIN IS PUT INTO A SPECIALLY PREPARED SOLUTION OF SALINE, PLASMA, AND WHOLE BLOOD...

IF ONLY THE PRESERVATIVE FORMULA IS RIGHT! ONE MISTAKE AND I CAN SPOIL EVERYTHING—BUT I MUSTN'T MAKE THAT MISTAKE! AND I'D BETTER GET RID OF THE BODY RIGHT AWAY!

AN HOUR LATER ON A DESOLATE AND WINDSWEPT ROAD THERE IS A STRANGE FUNERAL PROCESSION...

WON'T BE LONG NOW, HUMPHREY, UNTIL I'LL HAVE YOU SAFELY IN THE GROUND! IN THE MEANTIME, IF ANYONE ASKS ME, YOU'VE JUST HAD A DROP TOO MUCH!

HERE WE ARE AT LAST, OLD TIMER! NOW I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU A NICE QUIET FUNERAL ALL BY YOURSELF! NO FUSS, NO MUSS! AND VERY—(HAH-HAH)—CHEAP, TOO!

NOBODY HAS USED THIS CEMETERY FOR YEARS, MY FRIEND! AND NOBODY WILL EVER THINK OF LOOKING FOR YOU HERE! WHAT BETTER PLACE TO—(CHUCKLE)—HIDE A BODY THAN IN A CEMETERY, EH?

LOOKS LIKE YOU'LL HAVE COMPANY, HUMPHREY, BUT I'M SURE HE WON'T MIND SHARING WITH YOU! YOU TWO WILL BE AS SNUG AS BUGS IN A RUG HERE TOGETHER! SO IN YOU GO!

AND THE DOCTOR GOES ABOUT HIS GRISLY TASK...

NOW TO GET YOU COVERED, OLD FELLOW! JUST—(CHUCKLE)—THINK! YOU'LL BE HERE FOR YEARS, MAYBE CENTURIES, AND ONLY THE TWO OF US WILL KNOW!

THERE— ALMOST DONE! AND NOW I BETTER BE GETTING OUT OF HERE AND BACK TO THE LAB BEFORE SOME FOOL COMES ALONG AND DISCOVERS ME!

THEN A STRANGE AND TERRIBLE THING HAPPENS — SOMEHOW THE DEAD HAND ESCAPES THE GRAVE AND CLOSES AROUND THE MURDERER'S ANKLE...

YIIIIIIIII — IT GRABBED ME!

IT W-WON'T LET ME GO! BUT HOW CAN IT— IT'S ONLY A DEAD THING! EEEEEEE—

FINALLY HE MANAGES TO BREAK AWAY FROM THAT SINISTER GRIP...

G-GOT TO GET OUT OF THIS PLACE! MY NERVES MUST BE CRACKING UP! ONLY MY IMAGINATION, OF COURSE, BUT FOR A MOMENT THAT HAND SEEMED ALMOST ALIVE AGAIN!

I WAS A FOOL TO LET MYSELF GET SO FRIGHTENED! BUT ONCE I REALLY GET INTO THE EXPERIMENT, I'LL BE ALL RIGHT! I'LL PUT OLD MONEY BAGS BACK TO WORK FOR ME AT ONCE!

P1301

UNSUSPECTED BY THE POLICE, THE DOCTOR CONCENTRATES ON HIS GRISLY WORK! FINALLY, DAYS LATER, HE COMES TO THE CRUX OF HIS EVIL EXPERIMENT..

ONE MORE CONNECTION! NOW IF MY THEORY ABOUT THE ELECTRONIC IMPULSES IN THE BRAIN ARE CORRECT, I SHOULD BE ABLE TO **COMMUNICATE** WITH IT! ONE THING I'M CERTAIN OF— IT IS STILL ALIVE!

NOW I'LL SOON KNOW! THIS SPECIAL TELETYPE I'VE RIGGED IS IN DIRECT COMMUNICATION WITH THE BRAIN OF PORTER HUMPHREY? CAN YOU READ THE MESSAGE I'M SENDING?

LONG MOMENTS PASS LIKE EONS OF TORMENT! THEN, JUST AS THE DOCTOR IS ABOUT TO GIVE UP IN FRUSTRATION AND DESPAIR...

THE KEYS! THEY'RE MOVING, WRITING SOMETHING! THE BRAIN UNDERSTANDS ME! I'VE ACTUALLY DONE IT AT LAST!

YOU ARE A MURDERER! I WILL HAVE MY REVENGE!

YOU FOOL! DON'T YOU REALIZE YOU'RE HELPLESS IN MY POWER? I CAN KEEP YOU ALIVE OR DESTROY YOU, AS I SEE FIT!

LISTEN TO ME, BRAIN! THIS IS THE MESSAGE — I WANT TO KNOW WHAT STOCKS TO BUY ON THE MARKET? DO YOU UNDERSTAND? YOU MADE MILLIONS IN THE STOCK MARKET AND YOU'RE GOING TO DO IT AGAIN— FOR ME! NOW ANSWER!

A TAUNTING MESSAGE COMES BACK FROM THE THING IN THE JAR! IS IT LAUGHING AT THE DOCTOR???

I KNOW NOTHING OF STOCKS— WOULD NOT TELL YOU IF I DID! MADE ALL MY MONEY BY— HAH—HAH— SHEER LUCK!

LIAR! FOOL BRAIN! IT'S DANGEROUS TO TAUNT ME LIKE THIS! I'LL SHOW YOU WHO IS MASTER!

THE DOCTOR'S COOL SCIENTIFIC MIND EXPLODES IN A RED HAZE OF HATE AND FRUSTRATION...

CAN YOU SEE, BRAIN? CAN YOU UNDERSTAND ME? I'M GOING TO SMASH YOU INTO A THOUSAND PIECES! NOW...

SUDDENLY THE TELETYPE KEYS BEGIN AN INSANE CHATTER...

THE BRAIN HEARD ME! OR HAS SENSED THAT I WAS GOING TO DESTROY IT! IT'S SENDING ME ANOTHER MESSAGE!

CLICK-CLICK-ERRR-CLICK

RICK-ERR-CLICK-CLICKK

RRR-KCK-CLICK-CLICKK-KK

CLICK-CLICK-CLICKK-ERRR-CLICK-KNK

CLICK-CLICK

CLICK

OKAY. I WILL DO AS YOU SAY. BUY PHOENIX OIL, INVEST EVERY CENT. IS BOUND TO GO UP! NOW LEAVE ME IN PEACE!

HAH, THAT'S BETTER! PHOENIX OIL, EH? BUT I'LL BE BACK, BRAIN, I'LL BE BACK!

IT'S GOING TO WORK! I'LL MAKE A FORTUNE IN A MATTER OF DAYS! I CAN CONTINUE MY EXPERIMENTS, PERHAPS EVEN GET MORE BRAINS, ALL THE BODIES I NEED, EVERYTHING! I'LL BE A RICH MAN!

YES — I DID SAY PHOENIX OIL! BUY ALL YOU CAN, AND HURRY! I'LL TAKE ALL MY MONEY OUT OF THE BANK AND BRING IT INTO YOUR OFFICE FIRST THING IN THE MORNING! DON'T WASTE TIME, YOU FOOL!

BUT DOCTOR, I DON'T THINK YOU UNDER-STAND...

THAT STOCK IS WORTHLESS, DOCTOR! AS A FRIEND I WOULDN'T WANT TO SEE YOU GET STUCK! TAKE MY WORD FOR IT, PHOENIX OIL IS STRICTLY BLUE SKY! ROTTEN! YOU'LL LOSE EVERYTHING...

BUY IT, I SAID! BUY IT!

I TELL YOU I KNOW! DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND, YOU FOOL, I KNOW! I GOT IT STRAIGHT FROM THE ONE MAN IN THE WORLD WHO NEVER MAKES A MISTAKE! PORTER HUMPHREY TOLD ME HIMSELF!

PORTER HUMPHREY! IMPOSSIBLE—

AFTER INVESTING HIS LAST CENT, THE DOCTOR WAITS IMPATIENTLY FOR NEWS! AND THAT AFTERNOON...

HERE'S YOUR PAPER, SIR!

YES — YES! GIVE IT TO ME! I'M WAITING FOR VERY IMPORTANT NEWS!

NO! NO! IT — IT CAN'T BE TRUE! THE BRAIN COULDN'T HAVE BEEN WRONG — IT COULDN'T! PORTER HUMPHREY NEVER MADE A BAD INVESTMENT IN HIS LIFE! UNLESS...

OAK CITY NEWS

PHOENIX OIL REVEALED AS HOAX AND SWINDLE — IS BANKRUPT — LOSES MILLIONS!

UNLESS HE DID IT DELIBERATELY! THAT MUST BE IT! THE BRAIN LIED, GAVE ME FALSE INFORMATION SO I WOULD BE RUINED! IT WAS GETTING REVENGE! BUT NOW I'LL HAVE MY REVENGE TOO! I'LL KILL IT!

LABORA

DOCTOR MANNOX? WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU, DOCTOR! A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT A MAN CALLED PORTER HUMPHREY!

WHO? I — ER — DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!

YET YOU TOLD YOUR BROKER LAST NIGHT THAT YOU HAD BEEN TALKING TO HUMPHREY — THAT HE HAD GIVEN YOU A TIP!

HUMPHREY EMBEZZLED ALL THE MONEY FROM THE PHOENIX OIL CO. AND SENT IT TO MEXICO CITY! WE'VE GOT IT, BUT WE CAN'T FIND HIM! SOMEHOW I'VE GOT AN IDEA YOU CAN TELL US WHERE HE IS — AND WHY HE DIDN'T GET TO MEXICO CITY TO PICK UP HIS LOOT!

DID YOU SAY — P-PHOENIX OIL?

AND NOBODY PAID ANY ATTENTION TO THE STRANGE CLATTERING LAUGHTER OF THE TELETYPE...

RRRR-CLICK-CLICK-KK-KK-RRR-ER-CLICK-CLICK-K-CLICK-CK.

HO-HO-HEE-HEEE-OOOO-HAH-HAH-GOODBYE, DOCTOR! HAAAAAAA-EEEEEEEE-

The End

TWENTY UNHAPPY YEARS... A LIFETIME... GUS MENINGER LIVED WITH HIS WIFE EMMA, A NAGGING SHREW! IT SOUNDED CRAZY, BUT EVERY NIGHT HE WAS AFRAID, YES, AFRAID TO GO HOME HER NAGGING, HER SCRAGGLY HAIR, HER LONG SKINNY FINGERS MADE HIM THINK OF A WITCH! ONCE SHE HAD BEEN PRETTY... LONG, LONG AGO! FINALLY HE HAD TO GET RID OF HER... THERE WAS ANOTHER PRETTY GIRL IN HIS LIFE... HE MUSTN'T GET CAUGHT BY ANY TELLTALE

FINGERS OF DOOM!

SO THEY'VE FOUND YOUR FINGER-PRINTS, EMMA! WELL, IF ANYONE FINDS YOUR BODY THERE WON'T BE ANY FINGERS TO CHECK WITH... NO ONE'S GOING TO PIN YOUR MURDER ON ME!

Hy Fleishman

THE SHRILL VOICE OF EMMA CAME AS USUAL FROM THE DOORWAY WHENEVER GUS TRIED TO RELAX! AS USUAL HE NEVER COULD KEEP FROM CLENCHING HIS FISTS TIGHT, AS THOUGH HER THROAT WAS IN HIS GRASP!

GUS! PICK UP THAT NEWSPAPER! GUS, DO YOU HEAR ME! PICK IT UP!

IN A MINUTE, EMMA!

IF I COULD ONLY STOP THAT VOICE!

JUST KNOWING EMMA WAS THERE MADE GUS NERVOUS, MADE HIS HANDS SHAKE!

GUS... THE ASHES! THEY FELL ON THE TABLE!

Dark Mysteries #14, October 1953. Art: Hy Fleishman. Publisher: Master Comics.

HIS ONE ESCAPE FROM EMMA WAS HIS JOB.. DRIVER AT THE CEMENT MIXING PLANT! THE MORE HE HATED EMMA, THE MORE HE LOVED HIS JOB!

AT LEAST HERE I CAN FORGET THAT WITCH I MARRIED!

THAT VERY MORNING, MR. POMFREY, THE FIRM'S PRESIDENT CALLED HIM IN! THE GIRL THERE EXCITED HIM, THE WAY SHE LOOKED STEADILY INTO HIS EYES!

GUS, WE'RE PROMOTING YOU TO HEAD TRAFFIC MAN ON SATURDAY.. MEET YOUR NEW SECRETARY... MY NIECE!

HOW DO YOU DO, MISS!

MY NAME IS JENNIE MALLON!

NOW GUS ONLY DROVE IN THE AFTERNOONS! MORNINGS HE WORKED WITH JENNIE! THOUGH SHE WAS YOUNG, BEAUTIFUL, YET SHE SEEMED OPENLY TO ADMIRE HIM!

IT'S NICE WORKING WITH YOU, MISS MALLON!

YOU'RE A VERY NICE BOSS, MR MENINGER!

THAT NIGHT GUS WAS HAUNTED BY THE EYES, THE ALLURING SMILE OF JENNIE, EVEN WHILE EMMA RANTED AND RAVED IN HER USUAL WAY!

WHO MOVED THE FLOWERS FROM THE COFFEE TABLE? WAS IT YOU, GUS?

I THOUGHT I'D MOVE THEM OUT OF THE LIGHT, EMMA!

THE NEXT MORNING AS GUS WALKED TO THE PLANT THROUGH THE SPRING RAIN, EAGER TO SEE AGAIN HIS NEW SECRETARY, A VOICE CALLED HIM..

MR. MENINGER, WAIT, COME UNDER MY UMBRELLA!

I WONDER! WHO'S THAT? COULD IT BE..

IT SEEMED TO HIM THAT THIS LOVELY GIRL HAD WAITED FOR HIM! HE SUDDENLY FELT HAPPY, SURE OF HIMSELF!

JENNIE... ER.. MISS MALLON!

I LIKE "JENNIE" BETTER... GUS!

HIS HEART POUNDING LIKE A SLEDGE HAMMER, GUS CALLED EMMA TO EXPLAIN THAT HE WASN'T COMING HOME FOR DINNER THAT NIGHT! FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS MARRIED LIFE HE HAD MADE A DATE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN... JENNIE!

YES, EMMA, I'LL BE LATE! A MEETING! DON'T WAIT UP FOR ME!

IT WAS INCREDIBLE TO GUS, BUT JENNIE SEEMED TO LIKE HIM!...A LOT! HE HAD NEVER HAD SUCH A GOOD TIME SINCE HE WAS MARRIED!

TO US, JENNIE!

I'LL DRINK TO THAT, GUS!

SO THIS WAS THE END OF THE EVENING! GUS COULDN'T BEAR THE THOUGHT OF LEAVING THIS LOVELY GIRL... TO RETURN TO EMMA!

OH, GUS, IT WAS SUCH A LOVELY EVENING!

YES, JENNIE! A PERFECT EVENING!

TAXI

AS THOUGH BY A SINGLE IMPULSE, THEY DREW TOGETHER AND THE WHOLE WORLD SEEMED TO STOP IN THEIR KISS!

JENNIE... YOU'RE MINE!

GUS REACHED HOME AT TWO IN THE MORNING, TO FIND THE HORRIBLE FIGURE OF EMMA WAITING, MENACING...

SO, MR. GUS MENINGER! EXPLAIN YOURSELF! OUT TILL TWO IN THE MORNING!

THE BOYS STOPPED FOR SOME COFFEE, EMMA!

EXCITED, HIS BLOOD THROBBING, GUS LAY THINKING OF JENNIE! THE UGLY SIGHT OF HIS SNORING WIFE DISGUSTED HIM!

I MUST SEE JENNIE AGAIN!

SNNNNN

ONE DAY, A FEW WEEKS LATER, EMMA SHOWED UP UNEXPECTEDLY AT GUS' OFFICE!

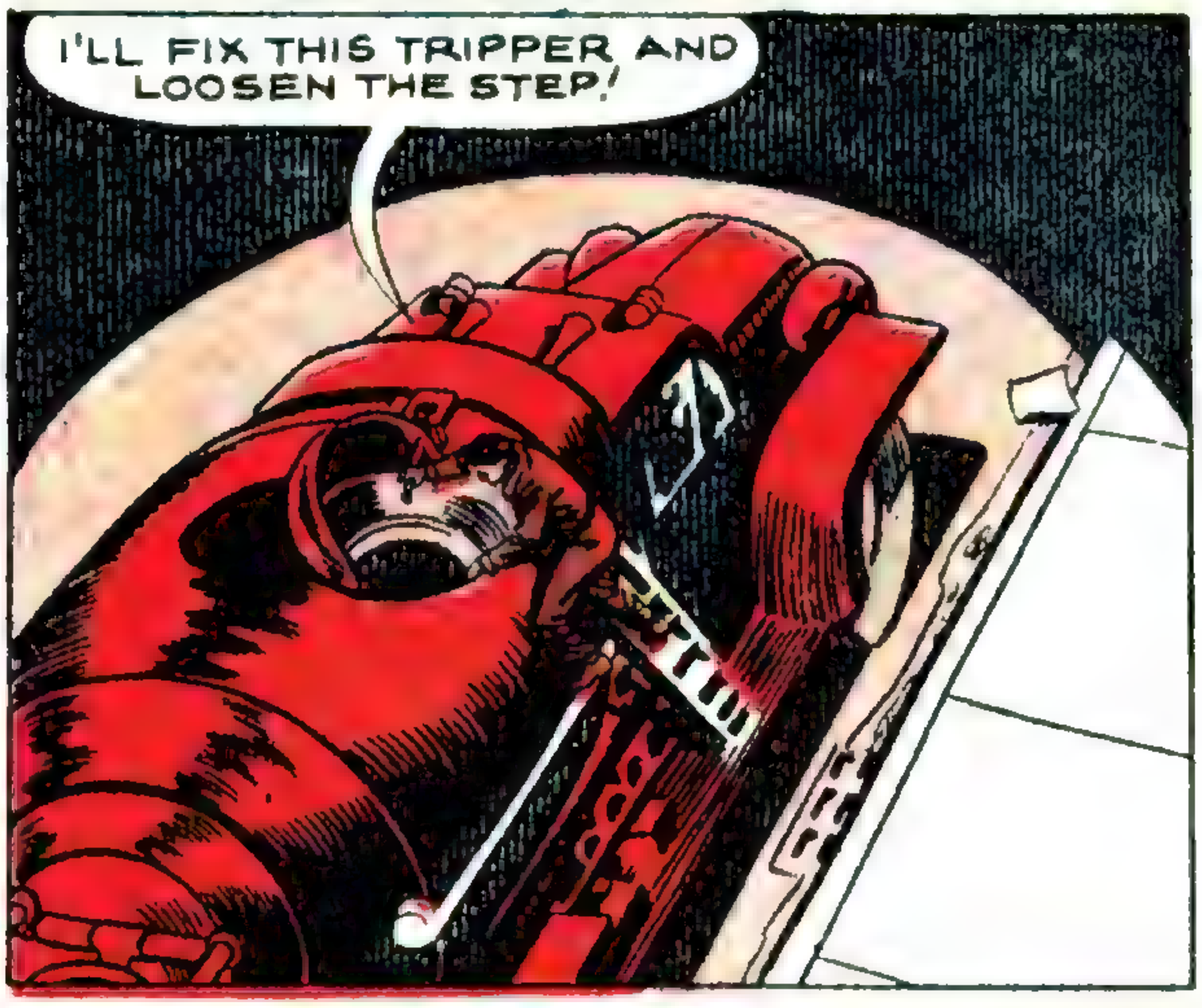
ER... EMMA! WHY ARE YOU HERE?

JUST DROPPED BY! WHO'S THIS GIRL? YOU WERE KISSING HER... ALMOST!

POOR JENNIE WAS SO EMBARRASSED SHE LEFT THE OFFICE IN A HURRY...

IN ORDER NOT TO BE LATE, GUS DROVE HIS MIXER HOME INSTEAD OF TO THE GARAGE!

THAT NIGHT THE IDEA CAME TO GUS... GET RID OF EMMA... THE PERFECT CRIME... AND BE FREE TO HAVE JENNIE!



THE NEXT MORNING, WHILE EMMA WAS PREPARING BREAKFAST...

EMMA, TO MAKE UP FOR YESTERDAY, I BROUGHT YOU A SURPRISE... BUT I LEFT IT ON THE BACK OF THE MIXER!
I'LL GET IT... ABOUT TIME YOU BOUGHT ME SOMETHING!

EMMA'S HAPPINESS DIDN'T LAST LONG! AS SHE STEPPED ON THE LOOSE STEP... AND PUT HER HAND OUT FOR HER SURPRISE... THE MIXER STARTED! ALL BUT HER HANDS WERE DRAWN IN!

THE NEIGHBORS HEARD THE CRY AND RUSHED OUT... POOR EMMA WAS ALREADY TOO FAR GROUND UP!

OH, THE POOR WOMAN!

SINCE GUS WASN'T NEAR THE SCENE OF THE "ACCIDENT," THEY COULDN'T BLAME HIM...

SORRY, GUS, TERRIBLE ACCIDENT.. THE DOCTOR COULD ONLY GET HER HANDS OUT OF THE MIXER!

SHE WANTED TO CLEAN THE STEP FOR ME... I'LL GET HER POOR HANDS AND GIVE THEM TO THE UNDERTAKER!

YES, GUS RETRIEVED THE HANDS... AND THAT WAS HIS BIG MISTAKE!

THEY BURIED EMMA'S SEVERED HANDS...

ONLY HER HANDS ARE BEING BURIED!

AND THEN GUS REALLY BEGAN TO LIVE! HE BOUGHT A NEW CAR WITH EMMA'S INSURANCE AND PURSUED THE LOVELY JENNIE!

I WANT TO MARRY YOU, JENNIE, BUT I CAN'T FORGET. POOR EMMA...

YOU'VE GOT TO LET ME HELP YOU..

...TO FORGET HER!

SOON AFTERWARDS, GUS WAS PROMOTED AGAIN... HE NO LONGER WOULD HAVE TO DRIVE A MIXER IN THE AFTERNOON!

JENNIE TOLD ME THE GOOD NEWS! SINCE YOU'LL SOON BE A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY, YOU WON'T HAVE TO DRIVE THE MIXER AFTERNOONS!

THANK YOU!

TODAY'S MY LAST TRIP ON THIS SCOW!

EMMA

GUS DIDN'T KNOW HOW RIGHT HE WAS! THIS ROAD PASSED THE OLD CEMETARY, WHERE A STRANGE EVENT WAS TAKING PLACE!

A HAND STARTED TO COME UP OUT OF EMMA'S GRAVE.... A DEAD HAND! LARGER AND LARGER IT GREW.....

THEN A SECOND DEAD HAND STIRRED AND SPRANG OUT OF EMMA'S GRAVE!

AS THE MIXER PASSED THE CEMETARY, BOTH IT AND THE TRUCK MYSTERIOUSLY STALLED!

SOMETHING MUST BE WRONG IN THE MIXING VAT! I'LL FIX IT FAST!

WAS IT A MIRAGE THAT GUS SAW AS HE CLIMBED INTO THE MIXER! WAS THAT A HAND... TWO HANDS...

THOSE THINGS LOOK LIKE... HANDS!

IT WAS THEN GUS KNEW THEY WERE EMMA'S HANDS... THEY WERE STARTING TO TURN THE MIXER! EMMA'S HANDS HAD COME ALIVE!

...BUT HOW... WHAT... OHH!

GUS, CAUGHT IN THE MECHANISM, COULDN'T CLIMB OUT... AND THE HANDS FROM THE GRAVE RELENTLESSLY KEPT TURNING THE MIXER... GRINDING INTO POWDER GUS AS HE CAME IN CONTACT WITH IT'S BLADES!

NO... STOP THE MIXER... AARRRGH!

THE END!

WHAT IS IT THAT COMES OUT OF THE NIGHT LIKE SOME APPALLING CREATURE OF HELL AND DEVOURS THE BODY AS IT DERANGES THE MIND ?? WHAT IS THIS MONSTROUS CREATION...THIS...
NIGHTMARE OF DOOM!
CIGARS
CANDY

LATE ONE EVENING, IN THE FARNLEY EXPERIMENTAL LABORATORIES, TWO BACTERIOLOGISTS ARE FEVERISHLY ENGAGED IN STUDYING A RARE AND MALIGNANT SPECIES OF BACTERIA!...
COME SEE THE MOULD, FISK! SEE HOW OUR LOVELY CREATURES DANCE UNDER THE MICROSCOPE!
I WISH WE WERE DONE WITH THEM, BARTLETT!

Chamber of Chills #15, January 1953. Art: Al Avison. Publisher: Harvey.

THEY'RE *HORRIBLE* LITTLE MONSTERS, BARTLETT!! THERE'S SOMETHING *EVIL* AND *REPELLENT* ABOUT THEM!!

NONSENSE, MY FRIEND, THEY ARE *BEAUTIFUL!* I ONLY FEEL *TENDERNESS* TOWARDS OUR CREATIONS!!

HOW EAGER THEY ARE TO *DESTROY* WHATEVER LIES IN THEIR PATH!! I AM STRANGELY DRAWN TO THEM, AS IF THEY WERE CALLING ME TO JOIN THEM!

AND I'M SORRY WE EVER *STARTED* THIS EXPERIMENT!!

I SAY WE SHOULD DESTROY THEM-- *NOW*--BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!! WHO KNOWS WHAT *FOULNESS* WE MIGHT HAVE UNLEASHED!

NEVER! I'LL NEVER LET YOU TOUCH THEM! I'LL *KILL* YOU FIRST!

AS BARTLETT SHOUTS HIS ANGER, THE WORD "KILL" STRIKES HIS TWISTED BRAIN LIKE A FLASH OF LIGHTNING, ILLUMINATING ITS DARKEST AND MOST EVIL CORNERS!!...

WHAT IF FISK *SHOULD* DIE? THE REWARDS OF OUR DISCOVERY COULD BE *MINE* ALONE--AND MY CREATURES WOULD BE FREE OF HIS *HATRED!!*

SEVERAL HOURS LATER, IN THE *SINISTER* HOURS BEFORE DAWN, DEATH RISES FROM HIS FESTERING GRAVE, AS BARTLETT PREPARES TO STRIKE WITH *VIOLENT FURY!*....

UGH-H-H!!! THEY SQUIRM ABOUT LIKE DAMNED SOULS!!

GAZE YOUR LAST UPON THEM! ONE SWIFT BLOW--AND YOUR WORK HERE IS *DONE!*

WH--?

AND NOW *DIE*, MY COLLEAGUE!

GIVE ME THAT KNIFE! YOU'RE *INSANE!!*

I WON'T LET YOU DESTROY THEM!! I *WON'T!!*

AS THEY GRAPPLED WILDLY IN THE DARKNESS, THEY CRASHED AGAINST THE MICROSCOPE, SENDING THE *FETID* AND *SLIMY* MASS OF MALIGNANT BACTERIA TOPPLING UPON THEM!...

THE BACTERIA!! YAARGH-H-H!

AAAH-H-H-H!!!

IT'S BEGINNING TO *SPREAD!* WHAT CAN WE D---*AAGH-H-H-H!!*

NO! NO!! MMM-B-B-B!

SUDDENLY THE MEN FIND THEMSELVES PROJECTED INTO A *FANTASTIC* AND *UNNATURAL* WORLD INHABITED BY LOATHESOME CREATURES THAT REEK OF EVIL AND MALICE!...

WH-WHERE ARE WE? WHAT'S HAPPENED?

LOOK!! THOSE--*MONSTERS!!* THEY'RE LIKE GIANT DISTORTIONS OF--OF *BACTERIA!!*

THEY'RE ENVELOPING US! WHAT CAN WE DO?

RUN! RUN! YAAAAH-H-H!!

WAIT!! WE *CREATED* THEM AND SO WE ARE THEIR *MASTERS!!* THEY WILL LISTEN TO ME!!

BUT THEY'RE ALMOST UPON US!

HIS FACE LIT WITH THE GLOW OF *MADNESS*, BARTLETT ATTEMPTS TO PIERCE THE DIM CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE SPREADING DEMONS -- IN A LAST DESPERATE BID FOR HIS LIFE!...

LISTEN TO ME!! YOU MUST RECOGNIZE MY *POWER* OVER YOU! I GAVE YOU LIFE AND I CAN TAKE IT AWAY! *OBEY ME!!* I ORDER YOU TO...

KILL HIM!!

NO! NO!!

YARRGHHHH

SWIFTLY, RELENTLESSLY, THE *PESTILENT* CREATURES DEVOUR THE MAN WHO HELPED TO CREATE THEM, LEAVING ONLY A *ROTTING SHELL, A PUTRID CORPSE!...*

WELL DONE, MY FRIENDS, WELL DONE!! YOU SHALL OBEY ME NOW IN *EVERYTHING! HA! HA! HA!*

THEY ARE TRULY MINE NOW, *MINE!!* WITH THEM I COULD DESTROY THE EARTH -- AND THE WHOLE PITIFUL AND DISGUSTING RACE OF MAN!! YES...YES...

HIS MIND A *TWISTED RUIN*, BARTLETT TURNS TO THE HORDE OF BACTERIA AND SPEWS OUT HIS *POISONOUS AND TERRIBLE* THOUGHTS!...

THIS IS MY COMMAND: *SPREAD* AND *GROW* UNTIL EVERYTHING IN SIGHT FALLS PREY TO YOUR *SLIMY* AND *GLUTTONOUS* HUNGER!! DEVOUR AND DESTROY!!!

LIKE SOME DEMON WITH A THOUSAND ARMS, THE MASS OF BACTERIA BEGINS TO SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE LABORATORY, *GREEDILY* CONSUMING EVERYTHING IT MEETS--*RAVENOUSLY* RUSHING ONWARD!...

....AND *ONWARD*...AND *ONWARD*!!...

GOOD LORD!! IT'S AS IF THE BUILDING WERE BEING *EATEN* BY SOMETHING... *LOATHESOME*!!

RUN FOR YOUR LIVES-- IT WILL *NEVER* STOP SPREADING!!

PEER LABORATORIES

OH-H-H-H-H-H!!

NEAR THE SCENE OF SPREADING HORROR, DOCTOR HUGHES OF A NEARBY BACTERIOLOGICAL LABORATORY WATCHES THE SCENE WITH *SHOCK* AND *TERROR*!...

IT MUST BE SOME RARE SPECIES OF BACTERIA THAT CAN GROW AT A!! *ABNORMAL* RATE AND THEREFORE SPREAD ITSELF OVER A VAST AREA!!

WE'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING, DOCTOR HUGHES! THAT DREADFUL MASS CAN *ENVELOP THE CITY* IN A MATTER OF HOURS!!

THERE'S ONLY *ONE WAY*: WE'VE GOT TO CULTIVATE A SPECIES OF BACTERIA OF AN *OPPOSITE TYPE* WHICH CAN DESTROY THE OTHER BEFORE IT SPREADS TOO FAR!

THEN LET'S GET AT IT AT ONCE!

IN A FRANTIC RACE WITH *DEATH*, THE MEN OF SCIENCE LABOR TO PRODUCE THE COUNTER-BACTERIA--MAN'S *ONE CHANCE* OF SURVIVAL!

DOCTOR HUGHES--YOU MUST HURRY! THE SPREADING BACTERIA IS ALMOST TO *OUR DOOR*!!

FINALLY...

IF THIS DOESN'T WORK, THEN WE'RE ALL *DOOMED!*

HURRY! HURRY! THERE'S NO TIME!

THE *FUTURE OF MANKIND* WILL BE DECIDED NOW-- LET'S HOPE WE LIVE TO *SEE* THAT FUTURE!!

AT THIS MOMENT, IN THE WORLD OF BACTERIA, THE *INSATIABLE* FIENDS, LED BY THEIR INSANE MASTER, PAUSE TO STARE AT THE *STRANGE FORMS* STIRRING IN THE DISTANCE!...

THERE'S SOMETHING COMING TOWARDS US!! THEY LOOK LIKE---NO! *IT CAN'T BE--!!*

LIKE TWO OPPOSING ARMIES OF *REPELLENT DEMONS*, THE TWO SPECIES OF BACTERIA CLASH IN *FURIOUS* AND *DEADLY* BATTLE!!....

YOU *CAN'T* DESTROY THEM-- YOU *CAN'T!!* I CREATED THEM! I GAVE THEM LIFE!! NO! DON'T!! *DON'T!!*

ARGHHH

AND BACK IN THE WORLD OF MEN, THE PEOPLE WATCH IN AMAZED RELIEF AS THE SPREADING HORROR PROCEEDS TO *DISAPPEAR* FROM THE SCENE OF IT'S MOST FEARFUL *CHAOS!...*

IT'S WORKING!! THE BACTERIA IS BEING *KILLED OFF!!*

WE'VE BEEN *SAVED!! SAVED!!*

BUT LOOK AT THE *HORROR* IT HAS LEFT IN ITS WAKE!

AND WE'LL NEVER KNOW *WHO---*

WAIT! I COULD HAVE SWORN I HEARD A *HUMAN CRY* COMING FROM THAT DIRECTION!!

M-M-B-B-B-

IT SOUNDS LIKE A *HUMAN VOICE!!* BUT HOW ON EARTH...

DON'T GO NEAR IT! IF IT TOUCHES YOU, YOU'LL DIE IN A MATTER OF *SECONDS!!*

M-M-B-B-B-B-

BUT IT'S ONLY A *GOLD WATCH!...* AND THERE'S AN INSCRIPTION IN IT...

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

AND AS THE LAST OF THE *DREADFUL* BACTERIA CRUMBLES TO OBLIVION, THE HEROIC DOCTOR'S VOICE ECHOES OVER A SCENE OF WASTE AND DESOLATION!

"AWARDED TO *JAMES BARTLETT,* FOR HIS INSPIRED SERVICE TO *SCIENCE* --AND TO THE *WORLD*"!!...

The End

HE WHO WOULD PROBE THE MYSTERIES OF THE EAST SHOULD BE PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE MACABRE CONSEQUENCES! THE BLACK MAGIC AND SORCERY OF THE FAKIRS HAVE BEEN HANDED DOWN FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION FOR CENTURIES AS CLOSELY GUARDED FAMILY SECRETS! IT IS SMALL WONDER THEN THAT THE INTRUSION OF AN INQUISITIVE FOREIGNER BRINGS ABOUT A VIOLENT REACTION! THE LENGTHS TO WHICH THE NATIVES WOULD GO TO KEEP THEIR SECRETS ARE UNMATCHED IN HORROR AND SHEER TERROR--- AS *ALAN CLARKE* FOUND OUT IN HIS...

SEARCH into the UNKNOWN!

THREE YEARS AFTER THE END OF THE WAR, ALAN CLARKE RETURNED TO INDIA TO LOOK FOR HIS WARTIME BUDDY, TED SOMMERS, WHO HAD REMAINED IN INDIA TO WRITE A SERIES OF ARTICLES ON THE INDIAN FAKIRS! BUT, HERE, LISTEN IN AS ALAN CLARKE EXPLAINS HIS MISSION TO A FELLOW PASSENGER, DR. KARLIN, THE NOTED ANTHROPOLOGIST...

---I HAD KEPT UP THE CORRESPONDENCE WITH TED UNTIL ABOUT SIX MONTHS AGO! FROM HIS LETTERS I GATHERED THAT HE WAS ON THE BRINK OF A GREAT DISCOVERY ABOUT THE MYSTERIES OF THE EAST!

THEN SUDDENLY ALL MAIL CEASED! AT FIRST I THOUGHT TED HAD BEEN TOO BUSY TO WRITE, BUT AFTER SEVERAL OF MY LETTERS WERE RETURNED MARKED "MOVED--NO FORWARDING ADDRESS," I GOT WORRIED!
YOU PROBABLY HAVE GOOD REASON TO BE!

Beware! Terror Tales #6, March 1953. Art: Maurice Gutwirth. Publisher: Fawcett.

TED SAVED MY LIFE DURING THE WAR AND I FIGURED THE LEAST I COULD DO IS COME OUT HERE TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM!

I WISH YOU LUCK, BUT I WANT TO WARN YOU THAT THE MYSTERIES OF THE EAST ARE HARD TO FATHOM! I HAVE STUDIED THESE PEOPLE FOR YEARS AND THIS CITY WE ARE NOW APPROACHING IS STILL AN ENIGMA TO ME!

WITH THE CONFIDENCE OF YOUTH, ALAN CLARKE STARTED ON HIS QUEST WITH HIGH HOPES! HIS FIRST STOP WAS AT THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY!

WHEN WE RECEIVED YOUR LETTER, MR. CLARKE, WE SEARCHED EVERYWHERE, BUT WE COULD FIND NO TRACE OF TED SOMMERS!

NEXT, HE TRIED THE LOCAL POLICE, BUT THE RESULTS WERE EQUALLY POOR!

NO, WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO FIND ANYONE WHO FITS YOUR FRIEND'S DESCRIPTION! PERHAPS WITH A LITTLE MORE TIME, SAY, A FEW WEEKS...

BUT TED MAY BE IN DANGER RIGHT NOW! I'M GOING TO FIND HIM MYSELF!

ALAN LOST NO TIME IN GETTING TO THE HOTEL BHOPAL, TED'S LAST KNOWN ADDRESS!

NO, SAHIB, NO ONE EVER CALLED FOR MR. SOMMERS' THINGS! WE HAVE THEM IN A BOX IN THE CELLAR! IF YOU WISH, YOU MAY SEE THEM!

GOOD! THEY MAY GIVE ME SOME CLUE TO FOLLOW!

THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ANYTHING HERE -- WAIT! THESE PAPERS -- THEY LOOK LIKE A TREATISE ON SOMETHING!

WHY, THIS IS A STUDY EXPOSING THE ANCIENT PRACTICES OF THE FAKIRS AS NOTHING BUT TRICKS AND LEGERDEMAIN!

AND THEN THE REASON FOR TED SOMMERS' DISAPPEARANCE BECAME CLEAR TO ALAN -- COLDLY CLEAR, TO THE POINT OF AN ICY FEELING DOWN HIS SPINE, AS HE REALIZED WHAT MUST HAVE HAPPENED TO TED!

THEY MUST HAVE KILLED HIM! THE FAKIRS MUST HAVE KILLED HIM TO STOP HIS EXPOSÉ OF THEIR MAGIC! BUT I'LL FIND OUT WHO DID IT AND I'LL REVENGE TED'S DEATH!

ALAN LOST NO TIME! WITH A PHOTOGRAPH OF TED IN HIS HAND, HE STALKED THE WINDING ALLEYWAYS OF THE ANCIENT CITY, QUESTIONING ALL BEGGARS AND MENDICANTS HE SAW!

SPEAK, OLD MAN! TELL ME, HAVE YOU EVER SEEN THIS MAN?

NO, SAHIB! BY THE WORD OF ALLAH, I HAVE NEVER SEEN HIM!

BUT AS ALAN TURNED TO CONTINUE HIS SEARCH ---

THAT FACE IN THE PICTURE! HOW WELL I REMEMBER IT! THIS BODES EVIL! I WILL HURRY TO WARN OUR LEADER!

SOON, IN A HOVEL IN THE POOREST SECTION OF THE CITY ---

AKOLA! HEAR ME! THERE IS TROUBLE! A FOREIGNER IS IN THE CITY LOOKING FOR THE SAHIB WHO DISAPPEARED! HE'S ASKING MANY QUESTIONS!

SUMMON ALL THE FAKIRS TO A MEETING TONIGHT AND SEE THAT THE STRANGER IS THERE! WE WILL FIND OUT WHAT HE WANTS!

THAT NIGHT, ALAN CLARKE SLEPT SOUNDLY AFTER A DAY OF FRUITLESS SEARCHING! BUT IN THE EARLY HOURS OF THE MORNING HE WAS SUDDENLY AWAKENED BY A GRIP OF STEEL ON HIS SHOULDER!

HEY! WHAT IS THIS?

COME, SAHIB! YOU'LL FOLLOW US!

YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME! I'LL SHOUT FOR HELP! HEL ---

YOU WILL MAKE NO NOISE, SAHIB!

TERRIFIED, YET CURIOUS, ALAN CLARKE GAVE UP THE STRUGGLE! HE FIGURED THAT MAYBE SOMETHING LIKE THIS HAD HAPPENED TO TED, SO HE MIGHT AS WELL FOLLOW THROUGH! AND IT WAS NOT LONG BEFORE HE FOUND HIMSELF BEFORE AKOLA, THE SNAKE CHARMER!

MY FOLLOWERS TELL ME YOU HAVE BEEN ASKING QUESTIONS OF THEM ALL OVER THE CITY! WE ARE ALL ASSEMBLED HERE NOW! SPEAK, SAHIB -- WHAT IS IT YOU WISH TO KNOW?

I HAVE ALREADY GUESSED WHAT I CAME TO FIND OUT! YOU KILLED HIM - ALL OF YOU!

YOU KILLED TED SOMMERS BECAUSE HE WAS ABOUT TO EXPOSE YOUR SORCERY AS A FAKE TO THE WORLD!

BACK, PANDIT! BACK TO YOUR BASKET! LEAVE THE SAHIB TO US! WE WILL LET HIM DECIDE WHETHER OUR MIRACLES ARE BUT TRICKS!

SNAP!

THE COLD, CRUEL EYES OF THE SNAKE CHARMER SPARKLED AS SHE GAVE THE COMMAND THAT WAS TO PUT ALAN CLARKE THROUGH AN EXPERIENCE NEVER TO BE WITNESSED BY AN OUTSIDER!

PUT THE UNBELIEVER THROUGH OUR SACRED SECRETS — AND SHOW HIM NO MERCY!

WE WILL LET HIM HAVE THE BED OF NAILS FIRST!

YOU'RE JUST TRYING TO SCARE ME! THERE'S A TRICK TO IT, I'M SURE!

IF THERE IS A TRICK, SAHIB, THEN YOU'D BETTER FIND IT NOW!

NO! NO! DON'T---

AIEEEE!

BUT THE BED OF SPIKES WAS ONLY THE BEGINNING!

SURELY THE SAHIB WILL WANT TO SEE MORE FAKE TRICKS!

YES, WITH THE HELP OF ALLAH, MAYBE HE WILL FIND THE TRICK TO THE NEXT ONE!

NO, YOU CAN'T MEAN TO PUT ME OVER THOSE BURNING COALS!

WE WILL REMOVE THE SHOES, SAHIB, SO THAT YOU'LL ENJOY THIS TRICK EVEN MORE!

NO, PLEASE! HELP! MERCY!

BUT ALAN'S PITEOUS PLEAS FALL ON DEAF EARS AS HE IS THRUST FORWARD OVER THE GLOWING COALS!

EEEEYEEE!

COME, SAHIB, YOU HAVE NOT YET SEEN ALL THE FAKE TRICKS!

YES, THERE IS STILL THE SWORD TO SWALLOW!

SINCE SAHIB IS A BEGINNER, WE WILL START WITH A SMALL SWORD!

HE HAS FAINTED!

COME, WE SHALL BRING HIM BACK TO AKOLA! SHE WILL KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH HIM!

ALAN CLARKE DID NOT KNOW HOW LONG HE HAD REMAINED UNCONSCIOUS! WHEN HE FIRST OPENED HIS EYES HE THOUGHT HE WAS IN THE HEREAFTER! BUT AS THE HOTEL ROOM SLOWLY CAME INTO FOCUS, HE REALIZED THAT HE WAS STILL ALIVE!

HUH! I'M STILL ALIVE! MAYBE IT WAS ALL A DREAM!

BUT THE NOTE ON THE TABLE ALONGSIDE THE BED DISPELLED THIS THOUGHT!

WHAT'S THIS? A NOTE!

'What the gods have willed shall be! Do not meddle with things that are beyond you!

I'M MORE SURE THAN EVER NOW! THOSE PEOPLE KILLED TED AND TO SCARE ME OFF THEY NEARLY KILLED ME, TOO! I'M GOING TO FIND THAT SNAKE CHARMER AND TURN HER OVER TO THE POLICE!

AS SOON AS HIS WOUNDS HEALED, ALAN CLARKE RESUMED HIS PROWLING OF THE WINDING, DIRTY ALLEYS OF THE CITY, SEARCHING, EVER SEARCHING, FOR THE SORCERESS HE NOW HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR TED SOMMERS' DEATH!

SHE'S IN THIS CITY, SOMEWHERE, AND I WON'T GIVE UP UNTIL I FIND HER!

THEN, ONE DAY, IN THE NATIVE QUARTER—

THE SNAKE CHARMER! THERE SHE IS! I'M GOING TO TELL HER WHAT I'M GOING TO DO! HER HENCHMEN CAN'T HARM ME HERE IN THE STREET!

ALMS! ALMS FOR THE LOVE OF ALLAH!

THE SAHIB RETURNS! I TRUST HE FOUND THE PUNISHMENT JUST AND PERHAPS HE HAS LEARNED NOT TO INSULT THE SECRETS OF MY ANCESTORS!

YOU MURDERESS! I'M GOING TO---

AGH! TAKE THAT SNAKE AWAY!

PANDIT WILL NOT HARM YOU, OF THAT I AM SURE!

I JUST WANTED TO TELL YOU THAT I STILL THINK YOUR MIRACLES ARE SOME KIND OF TRICKS AND THAT TED SOMMERS FOUND OUT ABOUT THESE TRICKS AND YOU KILLED HIM FOR IT!

AND I'M GOING TO THE POLICE TO TELL THEM ALL ABOUT IT!

WAIT!

IT IS TRUE ABOUT YOUR FRIEND! HE DISCOVERED OUR SECRETS AND WE HAD TO GET HIM OUT OF THE WAY! BUT WE DIDN'T KILL HIM!

THEN WHERE IS HE? TELL ME!

RETURN TOMORROW AND I WILL LET YOU SEE WHERE YOUR FRIEND HAS GONE!

SUSPICIOUS, BUT STILL ANXIOUS TO FIND HIS FRIEND, ALAN AGREED!

SUMMON SINGHALI! WE NEED HIM TOMMOROW, FOR THE SAHIB IS GOING TO GO THE WAY OF HIS FRIEND!

THAT NIGHT AT THE HOTEL, ALAN FELT THAT HIS LONG SEARCH WAS COMING TO AN END! TOMORROW HE WOULD FIND TED---AND THE REST WOULD BE EASY! HAVING SOME GOOD NEWS FOR THE FIRST TIME, HE WROTE HOME TO HIS BROTHER, FRANK, TO EXPLAIN THAT HIS JOURNEY WOULD SOON BE OVER!

THERE, AT LEAST I WON'T HAVE FRANK WORRYING ABOUT WHAT'S BECOME OF ME!

I GUESS I'LL GET SOME SLEEP NOW! TOMORROW'S GOING TO BE A BIG---

I'LL KILL IT BEFORE IT KILLS ME!

BUT ALAN REMAINED TRANSFIXED AS THE SNAKE WEAVED BACK AND FORTH IN FRONT OF HIM!

I MUST BE GOING CRAZY! I GET THE FEELING THAT THE SNAKE IS TRYING TO TELL ME SOMETHING!

THOSE EYES! THEY'RE ALMOST HUMAN!

I CAN'T! I CAN'T SHOOT IT!

THE NEXT DAY, ALAN KEPT HIS APPOINTMENT WITH AKOLA THE SNAKE CHARMER! HE DID NOT TELL HER OF HIS EXPERIENCE WITH HER SNAKE, FOR HE WANTED NOTHING TO STAND IN THE WAY OF HIS FINALLY GETTING THE INFORMATION HE WAS SEEKING!

THE SAHIB IS HERE ON TIME! SINGHALI, MAKE THE ROPE RISE!

LO! THE ROPE IS RISING! CLIMB TO THE TOP, SAHIB, AND FIND YOUR FRIEND, TED SOMMERS!

THIS IS PROBABLY ANOTHER ONE OF YOUR TRICKS, BUT I'LL HUMOR YOU JUST SO I CAN FIND TED!

I'M ALMOST AT THE TOP! WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

REACH THE TOP AND YOU WILL SEE!

AND AS ALAN REACHED THE TOP OF THE ELONGATED ROPE---

POP!

THERE WAS A MOMENTARY BLINDING FLASH AND THEN ALAN CLARKE FOUND HIMSELF CAREENING THROUGH WEIRD, OUT-LANDISH SPACE!

WHAT --- WHAT HAPPENED?

THIS HAS GOT TO END! I'VE GOT TO BE SOMEWHERE! THIS IS JUST SPACE --- OPEN NOTHINGNESS!

ALAN'S PLEA IS FINALLY ANSWERED, FOR, AFTER WHAT SEEMED LIKE AN ETERNITY, HE LANDED!

WHERE AM I? WHAT KIND OF PLACE IS THIS?

I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE! THERE'S--- THERE'S...; GULP;... NO EXIT!

THIS IS EITHER A FIENDISH NIGHTMARE -- OR I'M GOING MAD!

HEH! HEH! YOU'RE JUST LIKE THE OTHER AMERICAN WE HAD HERE A WHILE AGO! HE SCREAMED JUST LIKE YOU DID!

WHO ARE YOU?

TED WAS HERE? WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM? WHERE IS HE?

HE WENT BACK TO EARTH THE ONLY WAY OUT OF HERE! HE AGREED TO TAKE SOME OTHER SHAPE TO GET BACK! --- HE WAS REINCARNATED!

I'LL DO IT, TOO! SEND ME BACK THE SAME WAY YOU SENT TED BACK! I'LL FIND HIM AT LAST!

HEH! HEH! ALL RIGHT! YOU JUST SIT STILL NOW!

A SUDDEN WHOOSH OF FLAME, A PUFF OF SMOKE ACCOMPANIED BY THE WEIRD INCANTATIONS HEARD IN A DRY CACKLING REMARK AND THEN, BACK ON EARTH ---

THERE THEY ARE --- UNITED AT LAST! DO THEY RECOGNIZE EACH OTHER? WHAT DO YOU THINK?

NOW THAT ALAN IS MISSING, TOO, WILL HIS BROTHER FRANK COME LOOKING FOR HIM? IT LOOKS AS IF THERE'LL BE AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF SNAKES IN THE MYSTERIOUE EAST! I KNOW, FOR I AM THE MUMMY, AND I CAN SEE BEYOND THE PALE!

JOIN US NOW ON FACEBOOK AT
HORROR COMICS: 1950 & BEYOND!

LOVE, THEY SAY IS LIKE DYING A LITTLE! SO IF TWO LOVERS MUST DIE, WHAT BETTER WAY THAN TO DIE TOGETHER, HAND IN HAND? NOT IN THEIR WILDEST DREAMS COULD THE TWO PEOPLE OF OUR STORY HAVE FORESEEN THE HORRORS THAT LAY IN WAIT FOR THEM IN A LONELY PLACE! THEY SHARED A NIGHTMARE IN WHICH CREATURES FROM HADES, COVERED WITH THE SLIME OF AGES, CRAWLED OVER THEIR SHRINKING BODIES AND, BIT BY BIT, TORE AWAY THE FLESH UNTIL THE BLUE BONES WERE PITILESSLY EXPOSED! IF YOU WANT TO SLEEP WELL TONIGHT— DON'T READ THIS SPINE FREEZING TALE ABOUT NEW BONES FOR OLO...

BLACK DEATH

PAT AND LORNA FULLER, JUST MARRIED AND VERY MUCH IN LOVE, TAKE A SEA VOYAGE ON THEIR HONEYMOON...

BRRR — THIS FOG MAKES ME NERVOUS, DARLING! I WISH THE SUN WOULD SHINE!

STOP WORRYING, LORNA, BABY! WHAT'S A LITTLE FOG TO PEOPLE AS MUCH IN LOVE AS WE ARE? BESIDES, IT WILL LIFT SOON!

SUDDENLY, TO THE OMINOUS CRYING OF FOG HORNS, ANOTHER SHIP LOOMS OUT OF THE FOG! THERE IS A TERRIBLE CRASH...

WE'LL RAM HER!

SHIP DEAD AHEAD!

YAAAAAAA!

HELP!

EEEEEEEEEEE— SINKING!

Fantastic Fears #4, November 1953. Art: Iger Shop. Publisher: Farrell.

SECONDS OF FRENZY AND PANIC ELAPSE, AND THEN...

KEEP SWIMMING, LORNA! I'VE GOT A RAFT! I'LL HAVE YOU IN A MINUTE!

OH! H-HURRY! W-WATER IS SO COLD! I- I CAN'T STAY UP MUCH L-LONGER!

THEY ARE OVERLOOKED BY RESCUE PARTIES IN THE FOG!

AFTER A LONG NIGHT OF COLD AND FEAR, THE SUN FINALLY RISES!

LORNA! LOOK OVER THERE! AN ISLAND! WE'RE IN LUCK, HONEY! THERE MUST BE WATER ON IT, AND SOME KIND OF FOOD!

THANK GOODNESS! MAYBE A SHIP WILL PICK US UP SOON! WE CAN SEND UP SMOKE SIGNALS! THERE MIGHT EVEN BE PEOPLE HERE!

CAREFUL OF THE SURF NOW! DON'T WANT TO BASH OUR HEADS IN ON A ROCK! HMMM—SURE LOOKS DESERTED, DOESN'T IT?

Y-YES! I GUESS I WAS WRONG ABOUT FINDING PEOPLE HERE! BUT AT LEAST IT'S DRY LAND!

LOOK AT THAT! FUNNY LOOKING KIND OF SAND DUNES! ALL IN THE SAME SPOT, SORT OF LIKE A VILLAGE!

ARE YOU SURE THEY'RE DUNES, PAT? THEY LOOK SO—SO REGULAR! ALMOST AS THOUGH THEY HAD BEEN BUILT BY HAND! FOR SOME REASON THEY GIVE ME THE CREEPS!

A MOMENT LATER...

L-LOOK! THOSE STRANGE TRACKS IN THE SAND! CLAW-MARKS! I-I DON'T THINK I LIKE THIS ISLAND VERY MUCH!

BUT WE'RE STUCK HERE! MIGHT AS WELL MAKE THE BEST OF IT!

LATER, AS PAT GATHERS FIRE-WOOD...

I WOULON'T LET LORNA KNOW IT, BUT I'M AS JITTERY AS SHE IS ABOUT THIS PLACE! I FEEL AS THOUGH SOME-THING IS WATCHING US ALL THE TIME—SOMETHING HORRIBLE THAT IS—WAITING!

HAROLY HAS THE MACABRE THOUGHT PASSED THROUGH PAT'S MIND, WHEN HE HEARS LORNA SCREAM...

EEEEEEEEEE—PAT! HELP!

GREAT SCOTT! THAT'S LORNA, IN TROUBLE!

AS HE REACHES THE BEACH, A FANTASTIC SIGHT GREETS HIM...

GOOD GRIEF! LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THAT CREATURE!

AAAA— HELP ME! THEY'RE AFTER ME! GIANT ANTS! H-HORRIBLE!

AS PAT FIGHTS THE HUGE BLACK ANT, IT EMITS A SHRILL SNARLING SOUND...

YOU'RE A HORROR, BUSTER, BUT I THINK I CAN HANDLE YOU! I'LL SMASH THAT UGLY BODY OF YOURS TO PULP!

SQUEE-ERRR-SQUEERRR-

AND WHEN THE CREATURE IS DEAD, THEY EXAMINE IT CAREFULLY...

IT'S A BLACK ANT, ALL RIGHT! BUT A GIANT! TWO OR THREE OF THEM COULD KILL A MAN EASILY! AND BY THE WAY IT ATTACKED US, I'M AFRAID IT LIKED-HUMAN FLESH!

OH! D-DO YOU THINK THERE ARE MORE OF THEM?

SUDDENLY PAT GRABS HER ARM AND BEGINS TO RUN...

PAT! W-WHERE ARE YOU GOING? WHAT'S THE MATTER? IT'S DEAD!

C'MON! I JUST HAD A HORRID THOUGHT! YOU KNOW THOSE DUNES WE SAW? SUPPOSE THEY *AREN'T* DUNES! SUPPOSE THEY'RE *ANT HILLS?*

BUT IT IS ALREADY TOO LATE...

OH-OH! I WAS RIGHT! SEE THEM POURING OUT OF THOSE HILLS! THEY KNOW WE'RE HERE NOW AND THEY WANT US!

UGH! SO M-MANY OF THEM! WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO? THEY'LL EAT US ALIVE!

I KNOW AND I'M AFRAID OF WHAT I'M THINKING, BABY! LOOK AT THEM NOW, SWINGING IN A CIRCLE TO SURROUND US! BRRR— REMEMBER STUDYING ANTS IN SCHOOL!

THEY CAN THINK! THEY'LL MAKE A CIRCLE AROUND US AND THEN CLOSE IN GRADUALLY! AND THOSE HORRIBLE SOUNDS THEY MAKE!

SQUEEEE—

SRRRR—

PAT HAS AN IDEA...

DO YOU REALLY THINK WE CAN KEEP THEM OFF WITH FIRE? M-MAYBE THEY AREN'T AFRAID OF IT!

WE'VE GOT TO GAMBLE! FIRE IS OUR ONLY CHANCE TO LIVE! HURRY AND GET MORE WOOD, AND WE'LL MAKE A CIRCLE OF OUR OWN!

SOON...

NOW WE'LL SEE! GOOD THING I CARRY MATCHES IN A WATERPROOF CASE, OR WE WOULDN'T EVEN HAVE THIS CHANCE!

THEY'RE ALL AROUND US NOW! C-CLOSING IN!

THEY CROUCH INSIDE THE RING OF SEARING FLAME...

OH, THE HEAT! I—(GASP)—CAN'T BREATHE! OH, PAT, I'M SO AFRAID! WE'RE GOING TO—(CHOKE)—D-DIE!

MAYBE NOT! LOOK, THE FIRE HAS STOPPED THEM! NO ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS TO KEEP IT GOING, MAKE THE CIRCLE LARGER!

NIGHT COMES DOWN AND STILL THE ANT MONSTERS WAIT PATIENTLY...

THEY WON'T CROSS THE LINE OF FIRE, BUT THEY WON'T GO AWAY, EITHER! THEY SEEM TO KNOW WE CAN'T ESCAPE!

THOSE EYES! STARING AT US FROM OUT OF THE DARK! IF MORNING WOULD ONLY COME!

BUT WHEN DAWN DOES COME, IT BRINGS A NEW DANGER...

I KNOW WHAT THEY'RE WAITING FOR, LORNA! THEY KNOW WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF WOOD!

THIS IS THE LAST! WE C-CAN'T GET ANY MORE!

SQUEE-

SQUEE-

SQUEE-

THEN...

PAT, A SHIP! OH, WE'RE SAVED! THEY MUST HAVE SEEN THE SMOKE FROM OUR FIRE! WE'VE BEATEN THOSE CREATURES!

BUT NOT YET...

THE SHIP! TURNING AWAY FROM THE ISLAND! THEY EXPECTED US TO BE ON THE BEACH, NATURALLY, AND THEY MUST THINK THE ISLAND IS DESERTED AFTER ALL!

THEN LET'S GET TO THE BEACH! WE'LL HAVE TO MAKE A RUN FOR IT!

H-HURRY! THE SHIP IS STILL IN SIGHT! IF WE CAN GET TO THE BEACH IN TIME, WE CAN ATTRACTION THEIR ATTENTION YET!

COME ON, THEN! STICK CLOSE TO ME AND USE THAT CLUB AS IF YOUR LIFE DEPENDED ON IT! BECAUSE IT DOES!

BUT INSTANTLY THE FOUL MONSTERS SWARM OVER LORNA...

AEEEEEEEEEEEEE-

HELP! THEY'VE GOT ME!

AHHHHHHHHHHHH-

SQURRRRRRR-

SQUEEEEE-

THEY PULLED THE CLUB OUT OF MY HAND EEEEEEEE! MY L-LEGS! BITTEN SO I CAN'T STAND UP! PAT! D-DON'T LEAVE ME TO THEM! OHHHHH!

I'M COMING, DARLING! AS SOON AS I DRIVE THESE OTHERS AWAY! C-CAN'T FIGHT ALL OF THEM AT ONCE!

SQUEEEEEE—

SQUERRR-

YEEEEEEEEEE! THEY'VE GOT ME! EATING ME ALIVE! D-DON'T LET THEM! AAAAAAAAAAAA—

FILTHY CREATURES! I'M COMING, PAT! BE THERE IN A MINUTE! KEEP ON FIGHTING!

BUT... YOU! BLOCKING ME OFF, KEEPING ME FROM GETTING TO LORNA! I'LL CLUB YOUR FIENDISH BRAINS OUT!

SQUEEEEEE—

FINALLY... LORNA! GREAT SCOTT— WHERE IS SHE? N-NO! NOT UNDER THAT SQUIRMING HEAP! PLEASE DON'T LET LORNA BE IN THERE! PLEASE!

AND... GAAAA— IT— IT IS! ALL THAT'S LEFT OF MY W-WIFE! THOSE BRUTES! PICKED HER POOR BONES CLEAN IN A MINUTE!

NO LONGER DOES PAT TRY TO ESCAPE! HE TURNS, AND CLUB READY, FACES THE BLACK HORDE THAT CREEPS TOWARD HIM...

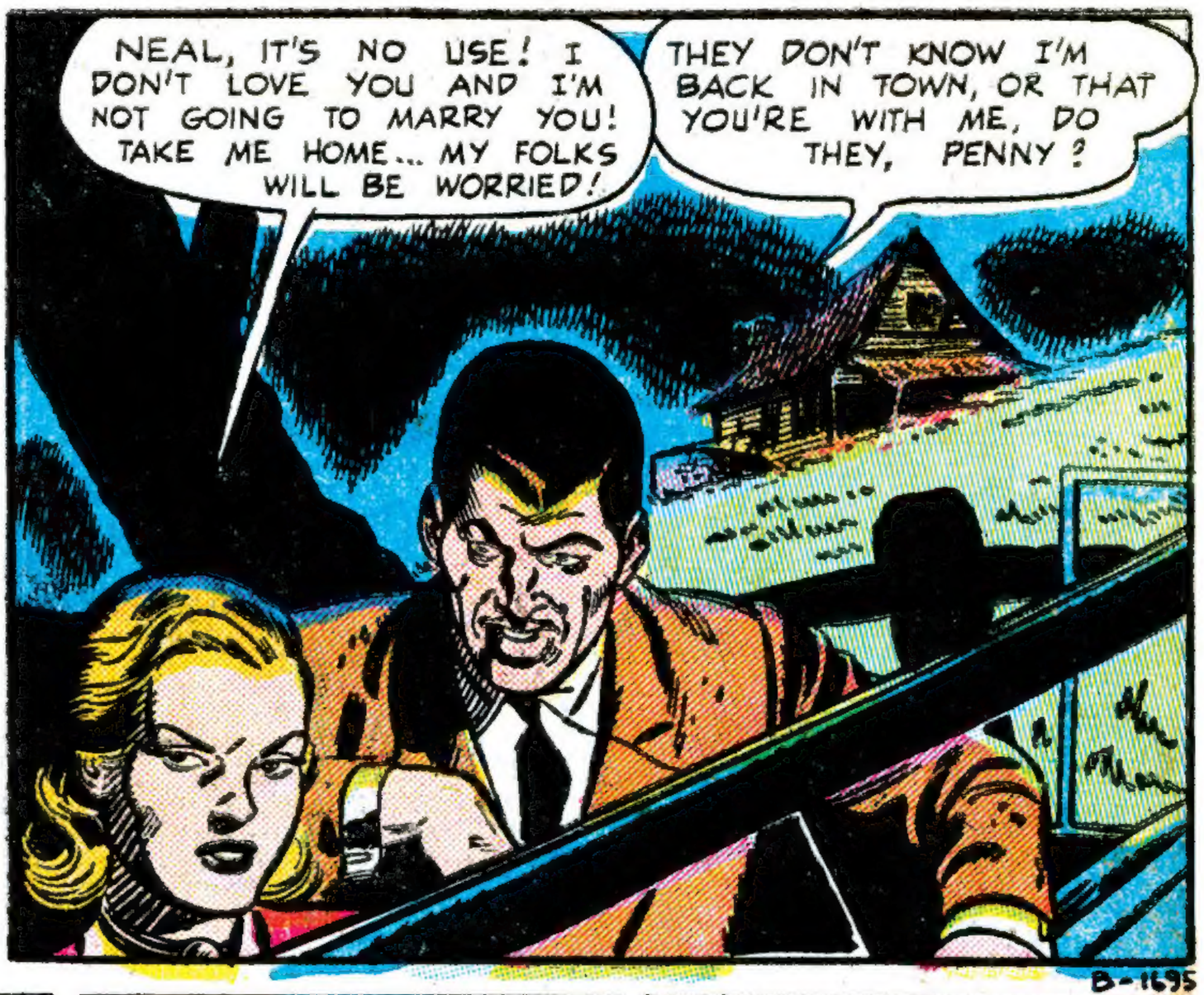
C'MON, YOU MURDERING CREATURES! YOU'LL GET ME SURE, BUT I'LL MAKE JELLY OUT OF SOME OF YOU FIRST!

IT DID NOT LAST VERY LONG! THE CREW OF THE DISTANT SHIP COULD NOT HEAR HIS CRIES AS THE LIVING FLESH WAS STRIPPED FROM HIS BONES! BUT IN THE END, BY SOME STRANGE CHANCE, THE ANTS DRAGGED THE SKELETONS TOGETHER AND LEFT THEM IN DEATH AS THEY HAD BEEN IN LIFE! PERHAPS **THEY** KNEW...

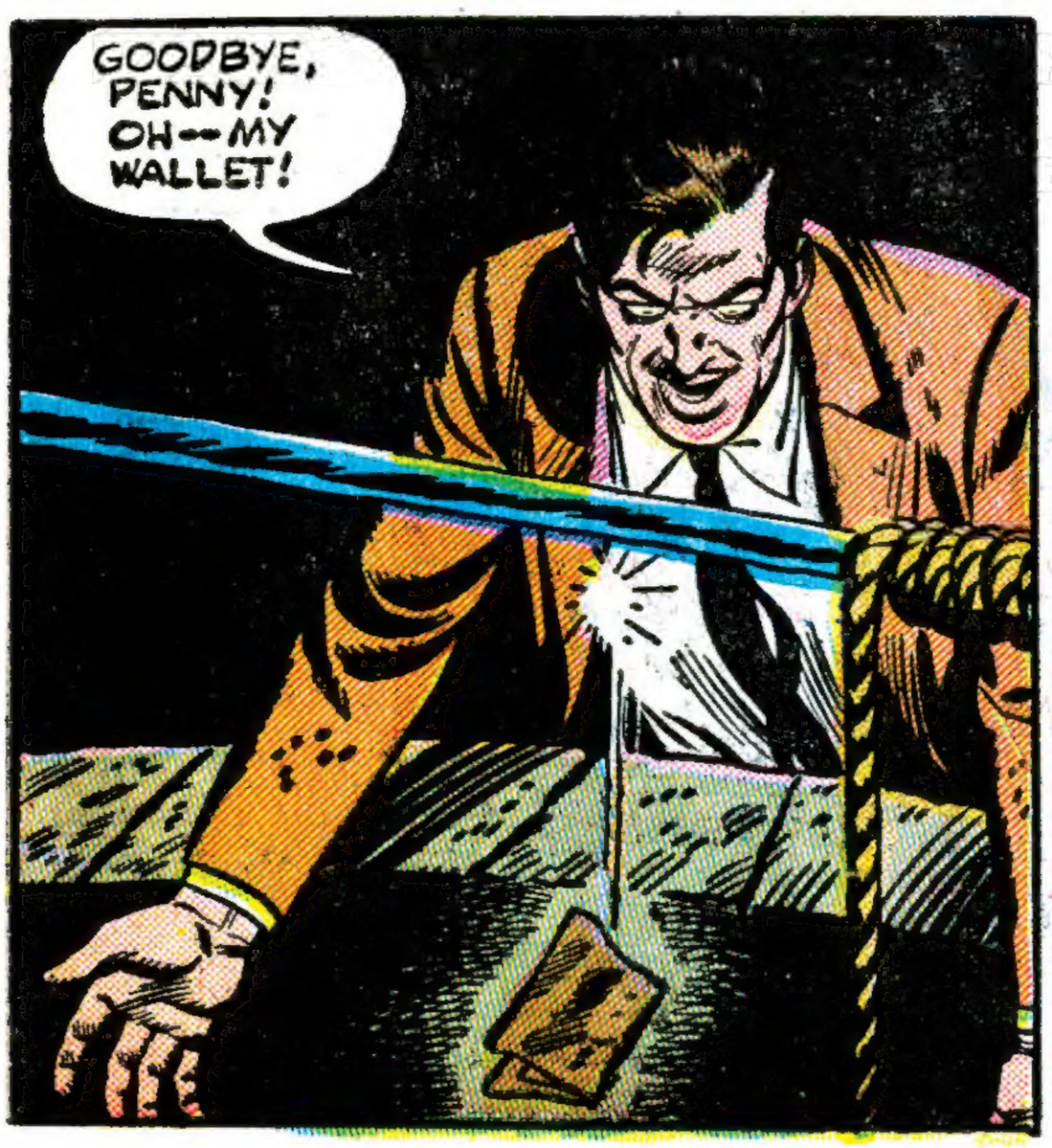
THE END

The FINGER of GUILT

A girl solved her own murder some years ago, in a weird and inexplicable fashion... It all started near a deserted, isolated farmhouse, in the Summer of 1940...


NEAL, IT'S NO USE! I DON'T LOVE YOU AND I'M NOT GOING TO MARRY YOU! TAKE ME HOME... MY FOLKS WILL BE WORRIED!
THEY DON'T KNOW I'M BACK IN TOWN, OR THAT YOU'RE WITH ME, DO THEY, PENNY?
B-1695

HOW COULD THEY? YOU CALLED ME AT THE OFFICE, AND ASKED ME TO DINNER! YOU WERE NOT EXPECTED BACK UNTIL NEXT WEEK!
THAT'S JUST IT! I PLANNED IT THIS WAY, PENNY! YOU SEE, I'M GOING TO KILL YOU!.. I LOVE YOU TOO MUCH TO LOSE YOU!



Adventures Into Darkness #11, September 1953. Art: John Celardo. Publisher: Standard.

SOME WEEKS LATER... AT SUNSET...

THAT'S FUNNY! SOMEONE'S UP AT THE MORGAN FARM!

IS THERE ANYTHING WRONG, MISS?

YES! LOOK IN THE WELL!

WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?

LOOK IN THE WELL!

SHE...SHE DISAPPEARED! WHAT DID SHE MEAN, LOOK IN THE WELL? I BETTER TELL THE CHIEF ABOUT THIS!

NEXT DAY...

FIND ANYTHING, CASEY?

THERE'S A DEAD GIRL DOWN HERE! I'M COMING UP WITH HER!

THIS WAS LYING ON THE BODY, CHIEF!

SHE WAS STRANGLED! I'LL BET THAT THE GUY WHO OWNS THIS WALLET KILLED HER!

I...I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!

WHAT'S THAT, KELLER?

THIS GIRL! SHE'S THE WOMAN WHO TOLD ME TO LOOK INTO THE WELL! SHE WANTED US TO FIND HER MURDERER!

MURDER WILL OUT, AND NEAL TEMPLE PAID THE PENALTY FOR HIS CRIME— TRAPPED BY HIS VICTIM WHO POINTED THE FINGER OF GUILT!

HA-HA!

HA-HA!

HA-HA!

THE END

ZONE